

TOP SECRET

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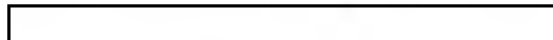


6. **NEW SYRIAN CABINET REPORTED DISINTEGRATING**



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THE ARAB-ISRAELI SITUATION

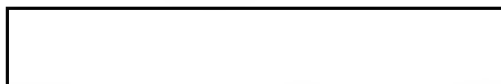
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1. SHEPILOV AND NASR CONCLUDE MEETINGS

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The week-long visit of Soviet foreign minister Shepilov with Premier Nasr in Cairo ended on 22 June with a bland joint communiqué reaffirming friendship, professing agreement on political, economic and cultural co-operation and voicing a desire to promote international peace.

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The communiqué, which probably reflects Egyptian drafting and which the Egyptian foreign minister reportedly hoped would not be received badly in the West, does not, however, alter the significant aspects of the meeting. Shepilov's visit leaves no doubt of Moscow's appreciation and approval of the Nasr regime as the undisputed leader of the Arab world. Regardless of how general or specific Shepilov's offers may have been, they are giving Nasr new confidence in his ability to pursue an independent course.

Egyptian business circles are reported continuing to speculate on the possibility that new economic arrangements might have been made, including one on the Aswan High Dam. They are fearful that additional Soviet bloc deals will further disrupt their traditional commercial ties with the West.

Ambassador Byroade has been given the impression that Nasr is actually now becoming more moderate and is anxious to keep relations with the West from becoming any worse. Regardless of whether or not Nasr has concluded extensive new deals with the USSR and is merely awaiting the appropriate time to announce them, the Shepilov visit is another step in the process by which Egypt is being drawn into closer alignment with the Soviet Union.

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2. PINEAU STRONGLY CRITICIZED IN FRANCE

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[REDACTED] The reaction of Frenchmen to Foreign Minister Pineau's East-West policies and to the views he expressed in his Washington visit has been highly unfavorable, according to the American embassy in Paris.

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[REDACTED]

In some quarters, Pineau is regarded as the worst French foreign minister since the war. Premier Mollet, whose popularity continues high and who is believed aware of the growing dislike for Pineau, is unlikely, however, to risk breaking up the cabinet by removing him.

Comment

The French probably regard the highlighting of wide differences between Secretary of State Dulles and Pineau on East-West problems as untimely and unwise, particularly since France now wants more than minimum American support for its position on Algeria. Pineau's views will also be considered as giving unnecessary aid to the French Communist Party's popular-front efforts. The growing conservative opposition to the Mollet government may now crystallize against its foreign policy rather than such domestic issues as increased taxes.

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3. COMMUNISTS MAKE FRIENDLY OFFERS AFFECTING BERLIN

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The Soviet embassy in East Germany informed the West Berlin government on 21 June that the USSR was prepared to return the Rundfunkhaus radio station in the Western sector, which the Russians have held since the end of the war. He said there were no strings

attached to this offer. The embassy also hinted that permission might be granted for the West German airline to use West Berlin's Tempelhof Airfield rather than Schoenefeld Airfield outside of East Berlin.

On 22 June East German interior minister Maron disclosed to the press that measures would soon be taken to ease control and travel regulations throughout Berlin.

Comment

During recent years the Soviet Union has refused to participate in the four-power administration of the city and has, in fact, declared that Berlin is the capital of East Germany. It has never, however, actually disclaimed Berlin's quadripartite status. By these friendly gestures the Soviets may wish to ensure a preservation of the quadripartite status of the city and hence their own interest in the affairs of West Berlin.

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6. NEW SYRIAN CABINET REPORTED DISINTEGRATING

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The new Syrian cabinet headed by Prime Minister Sabri al Asali, which was formed on 15 June, probably will be short-lived and may not even last long enough to obtain parliamentary confirmation. The conservatives initially agreed to a "national" cabinet representing all political groups. They are now opposed to giving the Foreign Ministry and National Economy portfolios to the left-wing, anti-Western Arab Socialist Resurrection Party and to its proposal that the ministerial statement include advocacy of some form of Syrian union with Egypt. The conservatives are reportedly now considering withdrawing.

On the other hand, powerful army spokesmen are demanding that proposed minister of defense Raslan be dropped. The army, if not satisfied, may force the formation of a cabinet amenable to its wishes. The dominant officer group in the army is strongly nationalist, opposes collaboration with the West and any association with Iraq, favors a tough policy toward Israel, and desires close cooperation with Egypt.

The embassy has a report that the conservatives were trying to prevent the formation of a responsible cabinet at this time. In this way they planned to make it impossible for Soviet foreign minister Shepilov to negotiate an agreement while in Syria. However, even without any planned disruptive tactics, the deep-seated differences in the cabinet, which includes archconservatives and out-right leftists, suggest that bickering and disintegration will be inevitable.

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THE ARAB-ISRAELI SITUATION
(Information as of 1700, 24 June)

An Israeli army spokesman said two Israeli soldiers were killed on 24 June during several hours of fighting on the Israeli-Jordanian border about 12 miles northeast of Tel Aviv. Jordan claimed Israel was trying to burn Arab crops and said the incident was a fight between Israeli and Jordanian farmers. [REDACTED]

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During a recent Israel-Lebanon Mixed Armistice Commission meeting concerned with incidents on this border which presumably resulted from a family feud, the Israeli representative truculently criticized the Lebanese for not controlling the border villagers and threatened "official" retaliatory action by Israel if incidents there continued, according to the American army attaché in Beirut. The attaché believes the Lebanese, aware of their military weakness, will "bend over backwards" to prevent further incidents.

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